

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00090 201656Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7655

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

ANDMBASSY TEL AVIV 4468

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0090

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, IS, JO

SUBJ: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ON WEST BANK

REF: JERUSALEM 19, TEL AVIV 151, TEL AVIV 190, AMMAN 144

1. IN JAN 19 CONVERSATION WITH LEADING WEST BANK NOTABLE ANWAR

KHATIB, I SOUGHT CLARIFICATION OF PROVISIONS OF JORDANIAN
LAW GOVERNING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND CHANGES ISRAEL PLANS
TO APPLY IN WEST BANK ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 12.
ACCORDING TO KHATIB ISRAELIS HAVE CHANGED LAW BOTH TO ENABLE
WOMEN TO VOTE AND TO PERMIT MULTIPLE VOTING.

2. KHATIB SAID JORDANIAN LAW, AS INDICATED AMMAN REFTL,
REQUIRES THAT VOTER IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PAY AT LEAST ONE
DINAR IN MUNICIPAL TAXES. LAW DID NOT PERMIT MULTIPLE VOTING,
HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF AMOUNT OF TAX. ISRAELIS HAVE CHANGED
LAW, ACCORDING TO KHATIB, TO PERMIT VOTER WHO PAYS MORE THAN
ONE DINAR IN TAX TO DISTRIBUTE ADDITIONAL VOTES, ON BASIS OF
ONE VOTE PER ONE DINAR OF TAX, TO OTHER ADULT MEMBERS OF
FAMILY, EMPLOYEES AND OTHERS IN SOME SORT OF VAGUELY
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00090 201656Z

DEFINED RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. HE IS NOT AWARE OF ANY

LIMIT ON NUMBER OF VOTES SO DISTRIBUTED AND SAID, FOR
EXAMPLE, WEALTHY MAN WHO PAID 500 DINARS IN TAX, COULD
POTENTIALLY DISTRIBUTE 499 VOTES TO OTHERS.

3. WITH REGARD TO CHANGE PERMITTING WOMEN TO VOTE, KHATIB
AGREED WHEN ASKED IF JORDAN HAD NOT ALREADY AMENDED LAW IN
THIS RESPECT (AMMAN 8780, NOV 17, 1975). HE NOTED, HOWEVER,
THAT OTHER JORDANIAN LEGISLATION OR AMENDMENTS TO
EXISTING LAW ADOPTED SINCE 1967 HAD NOT BEEN PUT INTO EFFECT ON
WEST BANK AND WERE NOT RECOGNIZED BY COURTS. THERE WAS
NO BASIS FOR SINGLING OUT THIS ONE AMENDMENT FOR
IMPLEMENTATION, HE SAID.

4. KHATIB CRITICIZED ANY CHANGE IN ELECTION LAW ON GROUNDS
OF PRINCIPLE, CONTENDING THAT IT VIOLATED INTERNATIONAL LAW
FOR OCCUPYING POWER TO AMEND EXISTING LAW FOR OTHER THAN
SECURITY REASONS. HE ALSO SAID HE OPPOSED MULTIPLE VOTING
AMENDMENT AND THOUGHT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER SIMPLY TO
DROP TAX-PAYING REQUIREMENTS IF, AS HE ASSUMES,
ISRAELI MOTIVE WAS TO INCREASE SIZE OF ELECTORATE.

5. COMMENT. IN ADDITIONAL TO DESIRE TO INCREASE NUMBER OF WEST
BANKERS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, NATURE OF CHANGE ISRAELIS HAVE RE-
PORTEDLY MADE IN ELECTION LAW WOULD ALSO SEEM TO INDICATE DESIRE
TO FAVOR MORE CONSERVATIVE, "ESTABLISHMENT" FIGURES OVER MORE
RADICAL, PLO-ORIENTED VOTERS. IF THIS CHANGE ACTUALLY APPROVED,
AS INDICATED BY KHATIB AS WELL AS REPORT IN TEL AVIV 190,
WE FIND CURIOUS LACK OF ANY REFERENCE TO IT IN CABINET
COMMUNIQUE CONTAINED TEL AVIV 151.
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